

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 13042

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MOPS, CA, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: MR IV SITREP FOR JULY 18, 1973

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO JULY 18TH
1973 REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0582

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS MARR, MOPS, CA, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: MR IV SITREP FOR JULY 18, 1973

SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTION INCREASED IN THE DELTA, ESPECIALLY
IN DINH TUONG. A JUNE 26 ARVN DEFEAT IN CHUONG THIEN
APPEARS LESS SERIOUS THAN FIRST REPORTED. 9TH DIVISION
CHIEF OF STAFF SAID CHUONG THIEN FIGHTING IS DOWN BUT
CASUALTIES STILL OCCUR. THE TOPE INDONESIANS IN THE DELTA
SAID THEY WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO WORK WITH THE MAYALSANS.
MGEN NGHI EMPHASIZED ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AT CEREMONIES
INSTALLING THE NEW VINH BINH PROVINCE CHIEF, WHILE THE
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OUTGOING PROVINCE CHIEF DEFENDED HIMSELF. END SUMMARY.

1. SECURITY SITUATION:

(A) MILITARY ACTIVITY PICKED UP

ACROSS THE DELTA WITH 19 REPORTED INCIDENTS JULY 16 AND 33 THE FOLLOWING DAY. AMONG THEM WERE EIGHT GROUND ASSAULTS, 36 ATTACKS BY FIRE, FIVE HARASSMENTS, AND THREE ACTS OF SABOTAGE AND TERRORISM. CHUONG THIEN AND DINH TUONG SAW THE MOST ACTION. REPORTED CASUALTIES FOR THE TWO DAY PERIOD INCLUDED 40 RVNAF KILLED, 202 WOUNDED, AND 5 MISSING. THE VC/NVA REPORTEDLY LOST 156 KILLED AND THREE CAPTURED.

(B) THE VC APPEAR TO BE STEPPING UP OPERATIONS IN DINH TUONG PROVINCE. SECTOR HAS REPORTED 10-11 INCIDENTS DAILY DURING THE PAST WEEK, UP CONSIDERABLY FROM THE 3-4 PER DAY JUST AFTER CEASEFIRE II. MOST INCIDENTS ARE VC-INITIATED. EVENTS ON JULY 17 ILLUSTRATE THE TREND. HAU BE VILLAGE, CAI BE DISTRICT, RECEIVED 25 ROUNDS OF 82MM MORTAR FIRE. A CONTACT IN SOUTHERN CAI LAY DISTRICT COST THE FIRST BATTALION, 10TH REGIMENT, 7TH ARVN DIVISION, THREE KILLED AND SEVEN WOUNDED. FIVE VC REPORTEDLY DIED IN THE CLASH. DINH TUONG CASUALTIES DURING THE DAY TOTALED SEVEN RVNAF KILLED AND 25 WOUNDED, AND 14 VC/NVA DEAD.

(C) A HIGH LEVEL 9TH DIVISION OFFICER SAID JULY 17 THAT THE JUNE 26 ENGAGEMENT OF A BATTALION OF THE 16TH REGIMENT OF THE 9TH DIVISION IN CHUONG THIEN RESULTED IN MANY FEWER ARVN KILLED THAN WE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY (CAN THO 0504). EARLY REPORTS STATED THAT 70 16TH REGIMENT SOLDIERS WERE KILLED AND AN UNKNOWN NUMBER WERE WOUNDED OR MISSING. THE OFFICER, HOWEVER, WHO IS BOTH KNOWLEDGEABLE AND FORTHCOMING, SAID THAT THE TOTAL FIGURE OF DEAD, WOUNDED, AND MISSING NOW STANDS AT 60, OF WHOM ONLY 12 WERE KILLED. HE SAID MANY OF THOSE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING HAVE SINCE RETURNED. THE DEFEATED BATTALION IS NOW BEING RECONSTITUTED AND RETRAINED IN VINH LONG, AND WILL BE SENT NEXT TO THE HONG NGU AREA WHERE THERE IS AT PRESENT LITTLE FIGHTING.

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(D) COL PHAM VAN VEN, 9TH ARVN DIVISION CHIEF OF STAFF, TOLD THE POLITICAL OFFICER JULY 17 THAT THE 9TH DIVISION NOW HAS FOUR BATTALIONS (TWO FROM THE 16TH REGIMENT AND ONE EACH FROM THE 14TH AND 15TH) OPERATING IN THE 9TH DIVISION'S CHUONG THIEN AO. THEY FACE NINE COMPANIES OF THE VC D-1 AND TWO ATTACHED VC COMPANIES. PHAM SAID NO MAJOR TROOP CLASHES HAVE OCCURRED IN THE PAST FEW

DAYS BUT THAT MORTARINGS AND BOOBY TRAPS CONTINUE TO TAKE A TOLL OF CASUALTIES. THE DIVISION G-2 ADDED THAT RADIO INTERCEPTS REVEAL THAT THE VC INTEND TO MOVE IN THEIR D--2 REGIMENT TO REPLACE THE D--1, WHICH WILL THEN MOVE SOUTH TOWARD KIEN THIEN DISTRICT.

2. GVN ACTIVITIES:

(A) AT THE INSTALLATION OF VINH BINH PROVINCE CHIEF LTC CAO TAN HAP IN TRA VINH JULY 17, MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGUYEN VINH NGHI EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESIDENT THIEU'S ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS. HE SAID IT WAS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE THAT THE LOCAL CADRE WORK EFFECTIVELY FOR THE PEOPLE, AND CITED MR IV'S RECENT FORMATION OF MOBILE OPERATIONS TEAMS (PMOT) AS A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT. HE APPEALED TO THE CADRE TO COOPERATE WITH THE NEW PROVINCE CHIEF.

(B) MEANWHILE, DEPOSED VINH BINH PROVINCE CHIEF COL NGUYEN HUU KIEM TOLD THE AMERICAN PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE THAT HE WAS REMOVED BECAUSE HE REFUSED TO HEAD PRESIDENT THIEU'S DEMOCRACY PARTY IN THE PROVINCE. HE SAID ONE COULD NOT SERVE THE PEOPLE WHEN HE SERVES A POLITICAL PARTY. KIEM DID NOT MENTION THE CORRUPTION CHARGES WHICH ALLEGEDLY CAUSED HIS OUSTER. ACCORDING TO THE PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE, MUCH OF VINH BINH CORRUPTION CENTERED AROUND KIEM'S LATE WIFE, WHO WAS KILLED WITH HER CHILDREN JUNE 20 WHEN THEIR JEEP WAS DESTROYED BY A MINE (CAN THO 0484).

3. ICCS: THE CONSULATE GENERAL'S ICCS LIAISON OFFICER RECENTLY SOUNDED OUT THE HEADS OF THE INDONESIAN DELE-
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GATIONS TO REGION VI AND VII ON THE PROSPECTS OF MALAYSIA REPLACING CANADA ON THE ICCS. THE CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICER NOTED THAT ACCORDING TO A RECENT STORY IN THE "SAIGON POST" THE MALAYSIANS STILL WERE ACTIVELY CONSIDERING PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMISSION. HE ASKED IF INDONESIA WOULD EXPERIENCE ANY DIFFICULTY IN WORKING WITH MALAYSIA, SINCE THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD BEEN VIRTUALLY AT WAR WITH ONE ANOTHER IN 1963-1965. BOTH COLS MARTOMAN OF REGION VI AND SANTOSA OF REGION VII ASSURED THE AMERICAN OFFICER THAT THE "CONFRONTATION" WAS AN EVENT OF THE DISTANT PAST. THEY STRESSED THE SIMILARITY OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE, RELIGION, AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA. COL SANTOSA ADDED THAT OFFICERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES FREQUENTLY EXCHANGE VIEWS AND VISITS. ALTHOUGH THE TWO COLONELS ARE SCHEDULED

FOR ROTATION TO INDONESIA, BOTH SAID THEY WOULD BE
DELIGHTED TO WORK WITH THE MALAYSIANS.
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